

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



NEWS RELEASE

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Chairman Davis Pushes National Guard Resourcing Improvements

Changes to Title 32 Gives States Greater Flexibility for Homeland Defense

Washington, D.C. – The FY 2005 Defense Authorization bill, approved by the House Armed Services Committee last night, included language that amended U.S.C. Title 32 to increase the range of homeland defense missions the National Guard can conduct under state activations. This amendment helps Governors by allowing them to request funding assistance and obtain greater operational flexibility from the Department of Defense (DOD) when those Guard units are used for homeland defense operations that are in the national interest. The need for changes to Title 32 arose out of the House Government Reform Committee's oversight of National Guard and homeland defense issues.

On April 29th, the Government Reform Committee held a hearing focused on the tension between the increased reliance on the Guard in the war on terrorism and increased responsibilities of Guard units to their state's governors to provide forces for homeland defense and security missions. States have been forced to balance resources between Guard units activated under Title 10 by DOD for overseas missions and those activated by the Governors for domestic needs. It is important the Guard continues to be resourced and equipped to fulfill their growing federal responsibilities, as well as the expressed security needs of states. This amendment allows for federal funding for military assistance to civilian authorities at the state level.

At the April 29th hearing, New York Governor George Pataki and several state Adjutants General said their states would benefit if Congress amended Title 32 to allow Guard members to be put on federally funded duty orders for operational use to support domestic homeland security missions. Under Title 32, the soldiers remain under the command and control of the Governor. Currently, the language of Title 32 is too limited for the Guard to fulfill the full range of homeland defense operations.

"I want to thank the House Armed Services Committee for including language that reflects the operational and resourcing realities of the Guard today. I also want to commend Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Paul McHale, Assistant

Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Thomas Hall, and Lieutenant General Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, for their efforts in advocating for this amendment. Homeland defense is not only the responsibility of the federal government, but state governments as well,” said Chairman Davis. “This amendment brings us one step closer to achieving the kind of intergovernmental coordination that is needed to prepare the National Guard so they can protect our citizens. It gives state leaders the flexibility and decentralized execution that is needed in times of emergency.”

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